

Message Text

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ACTION DLOS-06

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 SS-15 OES-06 EB-07 SP-02 L-03
ACDA-07 AGRE-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CEQ-01 CG-00 CIAE-00
CIEP-01 COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00 EPA-01 ERDA-05 FMC-01
TRSE-00 H-01 INR-07 INT-05 IO-13 JUSE-00 NSAE-00
NSC-05 NSF-01 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-04 PRS-01 USIA-06
SAL-01 FEA-01 /119 W

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FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5331
INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 3357

FROM THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS : PLOS
SUBJECT : STRATEGY FOR INTERSESSIONAL CONSULTATIONS ON LAW OF THE
SEA

REF: STATE 298001

1. SUMMARY. I BELIEVE BEST STRATEGY THAT WE CAN FOLLOW WITH
UAE RE FORTHCOMING LOS CONFERENCE IS TO START EMBASSY DIALOGUE WITH
UAE OFFICIALS AND WITH OTHER PERSIAN GULF RIPARIANS AS SOON AS
POSSIBLE WITH ESSENTIALLY SAME INSTRUCTIONS TO ALL GULF STATES. GIVEN

RECURRING ABSENCES OF KEY DECISION MAKERS HERE AND UAE DISPOSITION
NOT TO TAKE INITIATIVE ON LOS MATTERS, FIVE MONTHS IS NOT
TOO SHORT A PERIOD TO BEGIN QUIET DIPLOMATIC DIALOGUE ON KEY ISSUES
THAT WILL HAVE TO BE THRASHED OUT IF LOS CONFERENCE IS TO SUCCEED.
WE DO NOT SEE NEED AT THIS POINT TO HAVE VISIT OF SPECIAL EMISSARIES.
END SUMMARY.

2. UAE POLICY ON LOS QUESTIONS IS SUPPOSED TO BE DEVELOPED BY AN
INTERMINISTERIAL COMMITTEE WHICH MEETS INFREQUENTLY COM-
POSED OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM MINISTRIES OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
JUSTICE, PETROLEUM AND MINERALS, AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES,
AND DEFENSE. THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL DEPT IN FOREIGN MINISTRY
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ACTS AS SORT OF THE COMMITTEE'S EX OFFICIO SECRETARY AND HE

REPOZE TO FONMIN SUWAIDI, DEPUTY FONMIN ABDULLAH MEZRUI AND MINSTATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS SAIF GHUBBASH. KEY DECISION MAKERS ON LOS ISSUES ARE SUWAIDI AND UAE PRESIDENT SHAIKH ZAYID. THERE ARE NO INPUTS FROM ACADEMIC OR BUSINESS COMMUNITY THAT WE AWARE OF AND OF COURSE THERE IS A VERY THIN LEVEL OF EXPERTISE WITHIN UAEG ITSELF.

3. BECAUSE OF UAE'S GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION WITH COASTLINE ALONG PERSIAN GULF AS WELL AS GULF OF OMAN AND STRADDLING ENTRANCE TO GULF, UAE HAS MORE THAN ORDINARY INTEREST IN DIFFERENT LOS ISSUES. ITS PRIORITY INTERESTS ARE: A) EXPLOITATION OF HYDROCARBON AND MINERAL DEPOSITS OFFSHORE UP TO MEDIAN LINE IN PERSIAN GULF AND ALONG SHELF OF GULF OF OMAN; B) PRESERVATION OF FISHING RESOURCES IN PERSIAN GULF AND GULF OF OMAN; AND C) PASSAGE THROUGH STRAITS OF HORMUZ. EMBASSY HAD ANTICIPATED THAT UAE WOULD BE GENERALLY SUPPORTIVE OF US POSITION ON MANY LOS ISSUES BUT WE ARE NO LONGER QUITE SO SURE. AS A RESULT OF OMANI PRESSURE AND MEETINGS WITH IRANIANS, UAE HAS MOVED AWAY FROM ITS EARLIER ADHERENCE TO CONCEPT OF FREE PASSAGE THROUGH STRAITS OF HORMUZ (ABU DHABI'S 3126). MOREOVER, WE CAN EXPECT THAT UAE WILL NOT WANT TO GET OUT AHEAD OF ANYONE IN GULF REGION ON LOS ISSUES. AS IN PAST, UAE WILL WANT TO CONSULT CLOSELY WITH OTHER GULF STATES, PARTICULARLY SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAN, TO SEE HOW WIND BLOWS BEFORE MAKING UP ITS MIND AT VERY LAST MINUTE. IF PUSH COMES TO SHOVE, UAE IS PROBABLY MORE LIKELY TO BE INFLUENCED BY SAUDI POSITION ON LOS ISSUES THAN BY IRAN DESPITE LATTER'S ACTIVE COURTING OF UAE THESE DAYS.

4. IN MY MEETING WITH FONMIN SUWAIDI ON DECEMBER 12, I MENTIONED THAT I EXPECTED THAT WE WOULD SOON BE CONSULTING IN COMING MONTHS ON ISSUES THAT WILL BE DISCUSSED AT MAY 1977 LOS CONFERENCE. SUWAIDI SAID HE WELCOMED CONSULTATION. HE REMARKED THAT US SEEMED TO HAVE MORE PROBLEMS ON LOS MATTERS WITH ITS CLOSE ALLIES, IRAN AND OMAN, THAN WITH IRAQ WITH WHOM IT HAD NO FORMAL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. HE SAID UAE SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN THE IRANIAN AND IRAQI POSITIONS AND THAT IT WOULD WEIGH VERY CAREFULLY EACH ISSUE BEFORE MAKING UP ITS MIND. HE SAID US SHOULD NOT EXPECT UAE TO COME TO ANY CONCLUSIONS BEFORE MAY 1977 MEETING TAKES PLACE. HE CLEARLY IMPLIED THAT UAE APPROACH WOULD BE ONE OF EXTREME

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CAUTION.

5. GIVEN FREQUENT ABSENCES OF UAE LEADERSHIP FROM COUNTRY, FACT THAT SUWAIDI HAS SO MANY OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES THAT HE IS OFTEN NOT AVAILABLE, AND THAT UAE WILL BE CONSULTING CLOSELY WITH OTHER GULF RIPARIANS, IT SEEMS TO ME WE SHOULD START OUR DIPLOMATIC DIALOGUE PROMPTLY AND THAT POINTS AND ARGUMENTS WE MAKE TO UAE, EVEN THOUGH UAE

LIKELY TO RECEIVE THEM PASSIVELY, SHOULD BE SAME AS THOSE
MADE TO OTHER RIPARIANS PARTICULARLY SAUDIS AND IRANIANS. IF
WE CAN START THE DIALOGUE SOON ENOUGH, I DO NOT SEE ANY NEED
TO SEND SPECIAL EMISSARIES WHOSE ARRIVAL, IN ANY EVENT, MIGHT
NOT COINCIDE WITH AVAILABILITY OF KEY UAE DECISION MAKERS.
DICKMAN

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